

Cost of Friendly Ties Cited

New Pitch for SALT Treaty Argues Incentive of Soviets

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President Carter, reacting to the growing controversy over potential Soviet cheating on SALT II, has added a new defense of his emerging treaty.

The president is arguing that the strategic arms limitation process gives the Soviet Union incentives to comply with, not violate, the new treaty that is in the final stages of negotiations.

To make his point, Carter said at a press conference yesterday that any violation of SALT II could mean "a possible termination of the good relationship between our country and the Soviet Union on which detente is based and it might very well escalate into a nuclear confrontation."

The ability of the United States to independently verify Soviet compliance with the treaty has become a matter of sharp dispute because of a loss of U.S. monitoring stations on the Soviet border in Iran and because of recent Soviet missile test concealment practices.

THE ADMINISTRATION has stoutly maintained that there is no need to trust the Soviet Union to comply. It has been hard-pressed, however, to make its case publicly since U.S. monitoring by satellites and ground stations is for the most part highly classified.

Administration officials knowledgeable about SALT said Carter's remarks yesterday in no way modified the "no-trust-needed" position, but merely added another element to the verification debate. Carter insisted, as he has before, that "I would not sign nor present to the Congress or to the American people any treaty which in my opinion could not be adequately verified from the first day it is effective."

He went on to say that "there is another factor which must be considered. If the only purpose of the Soviet Union in the long, tedious negotiation of a SALT treaty is to have a document

they can violate . . . it would make our problem much worse."

Carter maintained, however, "There is an element of rationality and stability because the Soviets know that if we ever detect any violation of a SALT agreement that would be a basis on which to reject the treaty in its entirety."

WHILE CARTER was preparing for his press conference, a senator who the administration believes will be influential in the SALT ratification fight was delivering a sober message on his view of the case for strategic arms limitation.

Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., told the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that arms control would be a "feasible and sensible" element of national security only if the apparent Soviet drive for military superiority were thwarted by the United States and its allies.

"We have not competed effectively with the Soviet Union in the military arena," Nunn said. "Unless we and our allies are prepared to do so, we can expect future arms controls agreements with Moscow to do little more than ratify an emerging Soviet military superiority."

Nunn said the United States could only claim a "clinging parity" with the Soviet Union.

The senator offered a list of actions the administration should take — "with or without SALT" — to arrest the trends leading to arrest the trend leading to what he saw as U.S. military inferiority. It seemed clear that Nunn would have difficulty voting for a SALT treaty unless these steps were taken.

THEY INCLUDED increases in defense purchasing power over inflation; more tactical and strategic nuclear strength; a larger shipbuilding program; an answer to the Soviet threat to U.S. land-based missiles.

Also, "a halt to the self-destruction of our intelligence community;" a remedy for the failures of the all-volunteer force; and an insistence that Japan and the NATO allies increase their share "of the free world's defense burden."

At the press conference, Carter was questioned about an earlier assertion that he would abide by the terms of the SALT treaty even if the Senate rejected it.

Carter said he was not trying "to minimize the importance of the constitutional processes whereby treaties are negotiated by the executive and ratified or rejected by the Senate."

But, Carter went on, "It would certainly not be proper for me, if the treaty were not ratified, to immediately launch our country into a massive nuclear arms race."

Carter said the constraints contained in the treaty could be used to avoid such an arms race.

Carter also was asked if he had considered holding back on the treaty in an attempt to elect more congenial senators next year.

"No one has ever seriously considered, in my administration, to my knowledge, any slightest delay in concluding the SALT treaty for political purposes or any other purpose," he said.

Announcement of agreement of the SALT treaty is expected soon, perhaps within a few days.